Enabling Feedback and Collaboration in Software Help

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[ Better UX through Better UA ]
What we’ll cover in this session

- Why users like to collaborate
- Why should we enable feedback and collaboration in Help?
- Examples of feedback mechanisms in Help
- Examples of collaboration within Help
- How you can implement feedback and collaboration in your own Help
What do software users do when they have a problem?

- Ask colleagues
- Search on Internet
- Search user-to-user support forums
- Search wiki
- Call technical support
- Call a friend
- Search knowledge base and FAQs
- Access Help
Collaborative user-to-user forums

How Do I Turn of The "All Sizes" Option

Tom O'Connor, says:

Hi,

Just wondering how i turn of the All Sizes option on each and everyone of my photos in my photostream?

Cheers.
Posted at 11:01AM, 13 March 2009 GMT (permalink)

Dr. Keats pro says:

Just go here: www.flickr.com/account/prefs/downloads/?from=privacy
Select "Only You".
Posted 7 hours ago. (permalink)

Tom O'Connor, says:

Thankyou very much Dr.Keats.
Posted 7 hours ago. (permalink)

Dr. Keats pro says:

That's OK!
Posted 7 hours ago. (permalink)

Reply to this topic?
What is “Help”?

- Answers to questions
- Solutions to problems
- Written by a professional technical communicator
- Used *during* a real task
- May include tips for getting more from the software
- May be web-based
Help trend

- Windows Help (.hlp)
- HTML Help (.chm)
- JavaHelp
- Oracle Help
- Browser-based Help
- Oracle Help for the Web
- Server-based Help
- Eclipse Help
- Adobe AIR Help
- MS Help Viewer

Desktop-based, no interaction

Server-based, feedback and comments
Connecting the information

Email
User forums
Blogs

Web-Based Help

Informal
Formal

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Why should we care about Help?

- Provides “official” guidance and instructions

- Killer feature: context-sensitivity
  - No Search/navigation required
  - Direct access to information that addresses the user’s specific situation and needs
Why should we enable feedback and collaboration in Help?

- Users like to contribute and share information
- Feedback enables us to refine and improve the Help
- Shared comments improve the experience of Help
Feedback mechanisms from Help

QuickBooks Help (.chm)
Feedback mechanisms from Help

eBay Help

How do I pay my eBay fees?

eBay offers a variety of ways to make paying your fees convenient and safe.

To select your eBay fees payment method:
1. Click the My eBay button at the top of the eBay home page.
2. Click the "Seller Account" link in "My eBay Views" (left side of page). From this page you can view your account status, view your invoices, and choose your method of payment.
3. Pay your current fees using one of the payment methods offered.

To pay a suspended account, please review the Reinstating Your Account instructions.

Payment Methods
- PayPal: PayPal is a convenient electronic payment service that enables you to automatically pay your eBay fees.
- Direct Debit: This option is an easy way to make payment on your eBay account. Simply provide eBay with your Bank/Building Society account number and bank sort code, and eBay will automatically send a request to your Bank/Building Society to obtain authority to deduct your monthly invoice amount from your account.

Please allow for 13 days for your bank account information to be approved.

Related Help topics
- Paying Your eBay Sellers Fees
- Fees Overview
Feedback mechanisms from Help

- Coordinating One-Time and Automatic Payments: Before submitting a one-time payment, review the payment schedule to see when your automatic payments are deducted from your account. You should leave at least 5 days between any one-time payment and your automatic scheduled payment to avoid duplicate payments.

- Failure to Make Payment on Your eBay Account:
  eBay requires payment in full each month on accounts with balances of £1.00 or greater. eBay may suspend your account for non-payment of eBay fees. If you have not paid your outstanding eBay fees after our reminders and warnings, eBay reserves the right to refer your account to an outside collection agency for collection of the outstanding eBay fees. Please note that the collection agency will also charge you a proportionate and reasonable fee for the collection of the unpaid eBay fees, which will vary according to the amount owed and which will be payable in addition to the outstanding eBay fees.

Payment Requirements:
Learn more about payment due dates and late fees.

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Was this page helpful?
- Yes  - No

How can we improve this page? (optional)
700 characters left

Submit Comment
Feedback mechanisms from Help

Yes/no answer.
Not sure how this information can be used.
Feedback mechanisms from Help

Multiple choice (easy to analyze)

Yes/no

Freeform feedback

Was this information helpful?

Thank you! Your rating was submitted.

Please tell us why you didn’t find this helpful.

- I tried the solution and it didn’t work
- It didn’t answer my question
- It wasn’t detailed enough
- It doesn’t apply to my question
- It was hard to understand
- The feature I want is not yet available or it goes against Yahoo! policy

The information you provide will be used to make this information more helpful in the future. We will not respond directly to your comments.

Send Feedback
Feedback mechanisms from Help

Microsoft Office Help

Optional freeform feedback

Yes/no

Yes/no
Feedback mechanisms from Help

Adobe Help Viewer

Option to keep the comment private (not shown)
Hi, Matthew Ellison

Thank you for posting a comment to [http://help.adobe.com/en_US/RoboHelp/8.0/RoboHTML/WSOC81775E-3218-45ac-B3E2-C18254495939.html](http://help.adobe.com/en_US/RoboHelp/8.0/RoboHTML/WSOC81775E-3218-45ac-B3E2-C18254495939.html) on 03/02/2009. Your comment has been approved. In fact, it was so helpful, you have been given 5 Adobe Community Help points. These community points are now displayed on your profile page. For more information, please see the Adobe Community Help FAQ at [http://community.adobe.com/help/profile/faq.html](http://community.adobe.com/help/profile/faq.html).

We appreciate your participation in the Adobe community.

Thank you
Adobe Community Help Team
Feedback mechanisms from Help

MadCap Flare’s DotNet Help
Collaboration/sharing

Adobe Help Viewer

Comments from other users

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Collaboration/sharing

MadCap Flare’s DotNet Help

Topic Comments button – not prominent enough?

Specifying Chapter Breaks and Page Layouts

You are here: Features > Tables of Contents > More About Tables of Contents > Specifying Chapter Breaks and Page Layouts

Specifying Chapter Breaks And Page Layouts

A page layout and configure its frames and settings as necessary, for appropriate content. In most cases, you will probably want to associate your "outline TOC" (so that different page layouts can be used for "subsections" in a topic) with a "master" page layout with an endnote at the bottom. This layout will be applied to all topics in that target or project. Whenever you change page layout, you must first create a chapter break in order to do so.

Following are steps for creating chapter breaks and associating page layouts with TOC entries. Before completing these steps, you must first create an outline TOC. See Creating a Table of Contents.

In addition to specifying page layouts, chapter breaks also allow you to generate output in multiple files (as opposed to just one file), although a "multi-chapter" output can be also contained in a single file, depending on the output type. With chapter breaks, you can also take advantage of auto-numbering at the chapter level and automatically include endnotes at the end of each chapter. Finally, setting a chapter break can have an effect on whether a generated TOC can be included in the output (if you are producing Word or FrameMaker output).
Collaboration/sharing

Comments must be attributable

Registration Process

Your information has been sent to MadCap Software. When the information has been processed, you will receive an email with a link to a verification page. Click this link, or copy and paste the link into your Web browser to complete the registration. Please leave this window open until you are notified that the registration is completed.

NOTE: Some service providers have email filtering software that may cause the notification email to be sent to your junk email folder. If you do not receive a notification email, please check this folder to see if it has been sent there.

Please check if you have received the registration email from madcapssoftware.com and follow the enclosed directions to complete the registration.

MadCap Flare V4.2

Please check if you have received the email verification message from madcapssoftware.com

Submit Cancel
Collaboration/sharing

Specifying Chapter Layouts

After you create a page layout setting as necessary, you need to associate the appropriate content. In most cases, you associate different page layouts with TOC entries. Before completing these steps, you must first create an outline TOC. See Creating a Table of Contents.

You are here: Features > Tables of Contents > More About Tables of Contents > Specify Chapter Layouts

Add Comment

User Name:
MatthewEllison

Subject:

Comment:

(no comment selected)
You are here: Features > Tables of Contents > More About Tables of Contents > Specifying Chapter Breaks and Page Layouts

Specifying Chapter Breaks And Page Layouts

After you create a page layout and configure its frames and settings as necessary, you need to associate the page layout with the appropriate content. In most cases, you will probably want to associate different page layouts with various entries in your "outline TOC" (so that different page layouts can be used for different parts or "chapters" in a manual). Otherwise, you would associate a single "master" page layout with an entire target or project; in that case, the same page layout will be applied to all topics in that target or project. Whenever you associate a page layout with a TOC entry, you must first create a chapter break in order to do so.

Following are steps for creating chapter breaks and associating page layouts with TOC entries. Before completing these steps, you must first create an outline TOC. See Creating a Table of Contents.

Page Type for First Page
Matthew Ellison (15/03/2009 05:18:28)
I'm not sure what is meant by the first "legal"...
Collaboration/sharing

Open the Recent Comments pane
Collaboration/sharing

Creating Topics

Use the following steps to create a new topic.

How to create a new topic

1. Select **Project>Add Topic**. The Add New Topic section to the right displays the topic template selected. Click here to find out what templates are available.

2. In the **Template Folders** area, select one of the template files associated with the folder. The Source File field now contains the path to the template file. This file will be copied to your project.

3. In the **Templates** area, select one of the template files associated with the folder. The Source File field now contains the path to the template file. This file will be copied to your project.

4. If you want to place the topic into a subfolder that you previously created in the Content Explorer, click the drop-down arrow in the **Folder** section to the right and select the subfolder. Otherwise, leave the selection as "(root)."

For more information about creating subfolders to organize your topics, see [Organizing Topics in the Content Explorer](#).
Flare’s WebHelp

Add new comment

Comments displayed at bottom of topic
WebHelp

After you specify chapter breaks for your printed output, you can move on to any of the remaining tasks for creating printed output.

CREATE FEEDBACK SERVICE PROFILE:

You must create a user profile to post comments to this help system. Please fill in the information below. An email will be sent to the address you provide. Please follow the instructions in the email to complete activation.

User Name: 
E-mail Address: 
First Name: 
Last Name: 
Country: 
Postal Code: 
Gender: 

Submit  Cancel
Technologies for enabling feedback and collaboration

- Mailto link
- HTML Form
  - Server-side scripting
  - Database connection
- Custom web services / database server solution
- Adobe RoboHelp: Adobe AIR Help
- MadCap Flare: Feedback Server/Service
Example of a custom solution: DocCommentXchange (DCX) from Sybase

- Comment-enabled web-based documentation
- Presented as case study at 2009 WritersUA Conference in Seattle
- Allows users to:
  - Write comments about specific help topics
  - Read the comments written by other users
  - Develop comment threads
- When a user submits a comment:
  - It is immediately posted on DCX
  - A notification email is sent to the appropriate doc team members
Technologies used by DCX

- Google Web Toolkit (GWT)
- Database server based on SQL Anywhere
Adobe RoboHelp: Adobe AIR Help

- Comment on topics
- View previous comments
- Share comments with other users on same Local Area Network
- Targeted at reviewers
Adobe RoboHelp: Adobe AIR Help

- Which Help formats are supported?
  - Adobe AIR application only

- What do you (the Help author) need?
  - Adobe RoboHelp 8
  - Or Adobe RoboHelp 7 + RoboHelp Packager for Adobe AIR

- What do your users need?
  - Adobe AIR runtime

- Cost?
  No additional cost
Must use Adobe AIR Help format
Generates a .air installer file
Specify a folder on a shared drive for synchronizing comments.
Add a comment

Show previous comments

Synchronize comments
MadCap Flare: Feedback Server/Service

- Provide topic rating and feedback to author
- Share feedback via the Web with all other users of the application
Which Help formats are supported?

What do you (the Help author) need?
- Either MadCap Feedback Server + Microsoft SQL Server Standard or Express
- Or hosted MadCap Feedback Service

What do your users need?
- No additional requirements

Cost?
License fee for each Help system
Receiving feedback

- Feedback is automatically stored in an SQL database
- Email notifications can be sent out automatically to specific individuals:
  - Reviewers
  - Administrators
- Comments may be:
  - Accepted
  - Hidden
  - Discarded
Comments must be accepted before being visible to other users.

All topics that have been visited.
Feedback Explorer

List can be filtered by date
### Comments for a specific topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Advanced Procedure...</td>
<td>This procedure seems...</td>
<td>3/5/2009 12:58 PM</td>
<td>Pending Review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These Reviewers will received email notifications of comments.
Email notification

From: FeedbackRegistration@madcapsoftware.com        Sent: Thu 3/5/2009 3:59 PM
To: John Doe
Cc: 
Subject: [MadCap Feedback Server]: A new comment has been added to your help system

A new comment has been added to your help system.

Username: Bob Smith
Date: 3/5/2009 12:58:31 PM
Subject: Advanced Procedure2

Topic: Using/Procedure 2a.htm
Comment: This procedure seems to be missing some text.

Accept
Hide
Discard

Links for immediate action
Flare Case Study

- Total number of users in thousands
- Users are Help authors!
- Only about 50 registered to provide feedback/comments
- Most topics have no comments
- Overall:
  - average of less than one comment per day
- Comments are invariably constructive and positive
- Response to feedback generates goodwill and increased customer satisfaction
Flare Case Study

Compare with average of 50 contributions to Peer-to-Peer support forum per day
Conclusion from Flare case study

- Users prefer to raise questions/issues in forum rather than Help

- Feedback option in Help needs to be more prominent and compelling
Potential issues with feedback & collaboration in Help

- Connectivity
- Collecting and analyzing the data
- Acting on the data
- Responding to contributors
Questions?

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